thereof. Those members were speaking on behalf of the conservative section which formed but a small minority among Ezhavas. The Government would be doing a wrong if they proposed to accept the views of that section without paying due regard to the sentiments of the community as a whole. The Member hoped that, if the Government thought of altering the Bill in any respect, such alteration should consist only in provision being made for individual partition and *makkathayam*.

The Member next stated that Mahomedans and non-caste Hindus together formed about more than 50 per cent. of the population of the State. But, in spite of their numerical strength, they remained but meagrely represented in the two most important public bodies in the State, *viz.*, the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. Owing to the existence of communal strife in the country, the members of the above communities could not succeed in commanding a sufficient number of votes at the general elections. The Member thought that it was the duty of the Government to safeguard the interests of such sections of the people as were not adequately represented in the public bodies of the State. He urged the desirability of adopting the principle of communal representation so as to remove the existing inequalities and prayed that the rules and Regulations might be suitably modified to secure the object in view.

*President's reply.*—With regard to the Ezhava Bill, you said that the Bill, as drafted by the Council, should be passed without any changes and that the representations of Mr. Krishnan Asan and Mr. Padmanabhan Vaidyan on the subject were not the real voice of the community. Your remarks are noted.

You said that the Electoral Rules relating to the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should be so revised as to enable each community to secure seats in proportion to its strength. Your representation is noted.

**172. Constitutional Reforms.**

*Mr. Kanakku Tampi Chempakaraman Sankaran* (Member, Kalkulam taluk) said that Travancore was far in advance of other Indian States, in point of education and that the desire of the people for securing responsible Government was only just and proper. He argued that the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and the Legislative Council were unsuited to modern standards of civilisation. The following defects regarding the present Legislative Council were pointed out by him:—

(1) Section 11 of the Travancore Legislative Council Regulation, II of 1097, was objected to on the ground that it took away from the scope of the Council many matters of public interest which should be discussed and decided by the members and which should not be left to the judgment of one person, thereby giving rise to several mistakes and consequent discontent among the people.

(2) The Legislative Council had not full powers to discuss and vote on the budget. The Member urged that the distinction between votable and non-votable items in the budget should be done away with.

(3) Many members were at a disadvantage in voting as they chose, because the Dewan presided over the Legislative Council meetings, while the members felt greater security and freedom in voting when the Deputy President presided. He therefore pointed out that the Dewan should not be the President of the Legislative Council.

(4) The usefulness of the Legislative Council was largely diminished on account of the non-official members accepting office or other remuneration from the Government and the Member therefore urged the necessity for a rule prohibiting non-official members from accepting *any* remuneration from the Government.

(5) The disallowance of questions and resolutions brought forward by the members was then criticised by the Member. He said that the benefits that the Regulation conferred on the members and the public were being taken away from them. Even when questions were admitted, the answers given by the Government were vague or evasive. As an instance of the latter, he pointed out the answers given to the question relating to the alleged receipt of commission from the firm of Messrs. Ferris & Co. The Member also observed that a resolution regarding the



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appointment of a committee to go into the defects in the working of the Excise Department was disallowed when it was clear to the Government that 19 per cent. of the questions asked in the Council related to that Department. That the Government did not give effect to certain resolutions passed by the Council was also mentioned by the Member as a source of grievance to the public.

The Member then passed on to discuss the evils of administration by a single person and urged that the defects flowing from such a centralised system could be remedied only by the establishment of an Executive Council consisting of official and non-official members. In urging the necessity for an Executive Council, the Member pointed out that, in answering questions put by non-official members of the Legislative Council, there was no official member who could give a reply on behalf of the Government and instanced certain occasions when the official members could not, with any authority, give a definite reply binding the Government.

As regards the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the Member stated that it was the first representative institution worth the name in the State and that he was against the opinion of a few who considered that it should be abolished. What he wanted was that the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should also be invested with powers of legislation, interpellation, etc., as the Legislative Council, and for the institution to be really useful it should have control over the expenditure of the State which was increasing beyond limits as well as over taxation.

*Mr. C. Raman Pillai B. A., B. L.* (Member, Quilon taluk) began his representation with the general observation that the burning question of the day in India was the subject of constitutional reform. The Member asserted that the demand on the part of the people for constitutional reform was insistent and frequent; but the attitude of the Government was rather unsympathetic, as evidenced by the indifference with which they accepted the resignation of the committee appointed to revise the draft rules of the Assembly. The Member observed that the agitation in British India for securing constitutional reform tending towards securing greater political freedom had its effect on the people of Travancore also, who pursued similar methods for wresting greater political privileges from an unwilling Government. In that connection, the Member referred to the rather unsympathetic attitude towards popular aspirations adopted by successive Dewans who, as a rule, rather took pains to please their British masters than to advance the cause of freedom among the subjects of Indian States. The Member criticised the description of the Legislative Council as "the embodiment of the largest measure of constitutional reform inaugurated in any Indian State down to the present day" and stated that some of the progressive Rulers of Native States like Alwar and Bikanir had declared themselves in unmistakable terms in favour of establishing responsible government on the basis of dominion status in their respective States. The Member then outlined a scheme of responsible government, the salient features of which were the following: The Government should consist of the executive with His Highness the Maha Raja as the supreme head, and a cabinet of ministers appointed by him from among the elected representatives of the Legislative Council. The ministry should remain in office only as long as they retained the support of the majority for their policy. The ministers should be in charge of the various executive Departments, and should be responsible to the Legislature and not to His Highness the Maha Raja.

The Legislature should be composed of the Council and the Assembly. The former, consisting of elected representatives, should be the supreme authority in the conduct of the government of the country. The Council should have powers of financial and administrative control, and bills passed by the Council should become law with the assent of His Highness the Maha Raja. The Council should have the right of asking interpellations and moving resolutions on all matters of public importance. The powers of the Council might be limited by the representations, resolutions and interpellations of the Assembly and by the force of public opinion, apart from the constitutional position of His Highness the Maha Raja as the supreme head of the Government. The passing of measures involving fresh taxation should not be subjected to the consideration of the Assembly. Incidentally, the Member criticised the scheme of constitutional reform contained in the "joint representation" and

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stated that it was vitally defective in so far as it left out the question of the introduction of responsible government on which there was great unanimity of opinion. The scheme also was defective in the opinion of the Member, in so far as it involved an overlapping of the functions of the two legislative bodies.

As regards the reform of the Assembly, the Member said that there should be one Central Popular Assembly for the whole State, and a Divisional Assembly for each Division. The latter should consist of members elected by each *pakuthi* on a system of extended franchise, while the Central Assembly should be composed of representatives elected by the Divisional Assemblies at the rate of 15 members per division. The Divisional Assemblies as well as the Central Assembly should have the right of making representations and the latter should have, in addition, the right of moving resolutions and asking interpellations. The Member was of opinion that the Assemblies should serve three main purposes :

(i) to spread political education among the electorate;

(ii) to exercise a wholesome check on the activities of the executive and the legislature; and

(iii) to purge the Government of its evils, and the corruption, bribery and high-handedness of officials. The principle of local self-government should be put in practice on a more extensive scale than at present without adding to the existing financial burden of the people. In conclusion, the Member recommended the appointment of a committee to draw up a constitution, embodying the scheme of responsible government outlined by him.

At the conclusion of his representation the Member said that he omitted to represent one item in his representation on his first subject and asked for permission to make that request. On being permitted, the Member submitted that a committee consisting of the Surgeon in charge of the Quilon Hospital, the Chairman of the Quilon Municipality, and two prominent members of the Municipality might be appointed to look into the matter of the location of the small-pox hospital at Asramam or some other place.

*President's reply.*—Your representation is noted. Mr. Sankaran Tampi and Mr. Raman Pillai, the subject upon which you have spoken is a very important one. Your suggestions concerning the changes required in the Legislative Council Regulation and the Assembly Rules and your remarks about the correction of the electorate are valuable and they are noted.

**173. Responsible Government.**

*Mr. Joseph Thomas* (Member, Minachil taluk) in introducing his subject observed that it was natural that, with the growth of civic consciousness in the country, the idea should also be that any but representative government would be detrimental to its interests. He then discussed, in general terms, the necessity for a form of responsible government for Travancore and argued that such a government was needed for the country, not merely because the present system of government was bad, but also because, in his opinion, even the best government could not be a substitute for self-government. And, so far as the administration of Travancore was concerned, it had no consistent policy and it was also an administration by a foreigner. The Member then mentioned the disadvantages of a foreigner, particularly an officer of the British Government, being at the head of affairs in the State. Proceeding, he claimed that Travancore should be solely for Travancoreans, because the people of the Tamil Districts had already a predominance in the country in point of wealth and that they should not have political supremacy also. They were merely birds of passage and came to Travancore only for their monthly salary. By keeping away from the people of Travancore the highest appointment in the State, the sons of the soil lost their opportunity to display their intellectual ability. The removal of foreigners from the service and the substitution in their place of Travancoreans would not by themselves be enough. Nor would the distribution of places among members of any particular community suffice. What he wanted was a system of administration in which the officers were of the people's choice, holding office only so long as they enjoyed the confidence of the people.

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